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AN
HISTORICAL and CRITICAL
ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIVES
AND
WRITINGS
OF THE
LIVING AUTHORS
OF
GREAT-BRITAIN.

Wherein their respective Merits are discussed with
the utmost Candour and Impartiality.

Scribimus indoliti doctique poemata passim.

HOR.

L O N D O N :

Printed for the AUTHOR.

MDCCLXII.

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INTRODUCTION.

AS Critics by Profession are seldom entirely free from Partiality in the Judgments they pass upon the Productions of their Contemporaries, I have often thought a Work calculated to give the Public an Insight into the Merits of each modern Author; and thereby enable them to form a Judgment of what they are to expect from each new Publication, could hardly fail to prove acceptable. The Utility of such a Work appears in a still stronger Light, when we consider that the Reviewers, whose Business it is to direct the Judgment of Readers, have rather made it their Endeavour to mislead their Sense, as Nothing can be more evident than that in the Judgments which they pass upon Books, they are but too often influenced by the Name of the Author or the Publisher. In the following Treatise I have endeavoured to shew myself strictly impartial; and this I could do the more easily, as I have no Connection with any of the Authors whose Works I criticise; and must of Consequence be free from any Prejudice in their Favour, or the contrary. I intend, however, to deviate from the usual Practice of Critics, who seem to have inverted the Maxim of the Civilians, and to think that if they must err in their Judgments, it should be on the Side of

Severity. In the Course of this Work I have all along observed a contrary Conduct, making it a Rule to dwell more upon the Beauties of each Author, than upon his Defects, as I have always observed that the ignorant and narrow-minded are most ready at finding Faults, and that Critics of real Discernment shew most Indulgence in animadverting upon the Blemishes of a Composition, just as truly virtuous Men are the readiest to excuse the Frailties of human Nature. I do not, however, flatter myself that every Author who peruses the following Essay will be satisfied with the Manner in which he is treated in it, as he that adheres strictly to Truth can never expect to please every Body. I shall, however, take particular Care to avoid all personal Reflections (a Precaution which has been but too little observed by most Critics) and as I have the Good of the Public in View, not the Gratification of any particular Man, or Set of Men, I shall beg Leave to remind such as may be offended by the Liberties taken with their Writings, of the Justness of that antient Maxim, *Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica veritas.*

AN

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Dr. YOUNG.

I Shall place Dr. *Edward Young* at the Head of my List of modern Authors, tho' he may not improperly be looked upon as an Author of the last Age, having been Contemporary with *Pope, Swift, Gay, Arbuthnot, Addison, Rowe, Prior, &c.* Most of his Works were published in the Reigns of *Queen Anne* or *George I.* yet those which he has lately favoured the Public with, sufficiently shew that his advanced Age has not in the least diminished the Fire of his Genius. His *Night Thoughts* may justly be ranked amongst the first-rate poetical Compositions, tho' it must be owned, that they are very unequal

equal, and that tho' they contain many most beautiful and sublime Passages, there are some to be met with in them which are altogether flat and insipid. The Tragedy of *The Brothers*, wrote by our Author, was played about nine Years ago, and the Doctor, who is remarkable for his Generosity among other shining Qualities, ceded the Profits arising from the Representation to the Players. This Piece is in a great Measure taken from the *Mitbridates* of the celebrated *Racine*: It is not without Merit, tho' not equal to the other dramatic Works of this Author. The last new Production of Dr. Young's is a critical Treatise entitled, *Thoughts upon original Composition*, addressed to the Author of *Sir Charles Grandison*. This Work is at once spirited and judicious, and, like *Longinus's* Discourse upon the Sublime, discovers the Critic's Discernment blended with the Poet's Fire. The other Productions of our Author shew him to be possessed of a Talent for various different Sorts of Compositions. In Satire he must be acknowledged to hold the next Place to Mr. Pope, nay, he would be doubtless thought to equal him, if the Harmony of his Numbers did but come up to the Sharpness of his Censures, and the Vivacity of his Wit. The Tragedy of the *Revenge* shews him to be Master of the Passions, and is one of the best Pieces represented upon the *English Stage*. However, if I might be allowed to give my own Opinion, I should not scruple to pronounce the *True Estimate of human Life* to be his Masterpiece. It abounds with Thoughts equally shining and just, and does not seem in the least inferior to the most admired Compositions of *Seneca*, to whom our Author seems to bear a strong Resemblance. His *Poem upon the last Day* abounds with the Sublime, as that *upon the Fate of Lady Jane Gray* does with the pathetic. It is remarkable,

able, that this Author, who has excelled in almost every Species of Eloquence, should be defective in Elocution, being said to deliver his own Discourses in a Manner altogether unassuming. With Regard to his private Character, he is said to have very strong Passions (as is generally the Case with Men of Genius) but this Defect, if it be one, is abundantly compensated for, by his universal Philanthropy.

Mr. JOHNSON.

Samuel Johnson, M. A. after having studied at Oxford, kept for some Time a private Academy at *Litchfield*, but being by Nature endowed with a Genius which shews him to have been born to instruct Mankind, and not teach Boys, he came to *London*, where he soon acquired a distinguished Character in the Republic of Letters. That excellent Collection of Essays, which he published in periodical Papers, under the Title of *The Rambler*, would be sufficient to immortalize his Name. It is by many (and in my Opinion not without Reason) preferred to the *Spectator*; and indeed, if it was only equal to it (which it is universally allowed to be) it would reflect the highest Honour upon its Author; for he that alone has composed a Work equal in Merit to one produced by a Coalition of the brightest Geniuses, is doubtless worthy of the highest Encomiums. Mr. *Johnson* has likewise composed another Work of the same Kind, entitled, *The Idler*. This, tho' superior to most of the Productions of other modern Essay Writers, does not equal the *Rambler*, and several of the Papers, which turn upon Subjects before treated in the latter, tho' in different Words, give Room to think, that the Author had almost exhausted

exhausted his Stock of Subjects in the first Work. But Mr. *Johnson's* Genius is as various as prolific; he does not derive his Reputation as an Author from one Species of Composition. His Tragedy of *Irene*, though it was played without Success, discovers the true Spirit of Poetry, and is allowed by all judicious Critics to be the best that has been wrote these last twenty Years. As this Piece is not now generally known, I shall beg Leave to cite one Passage of it, as a Proof of the Truth of what I have advanced, and a Specimen of this Author's Genius for Poetry. At a Meeting of Conspirators, one of which is known to be deeply in Love with a certain Lady, an old Visir reproaches the Lover with proposing a Measure favourable to the Interest of his Passion, tho' it ran counter to the Dictates of Reason; whereupon the amorous Conspirator makes the following spirited Reply.

"Hast thou grown old amidst the Wiles of Courts,
And turn'd the instructive Page of human Life,
To cant at last of Reason to a Lover?
Know'st thou not yet, when Love invades the Soul,
That all her Faculties receive its Chains?
That Reason yields Submission to its Empire,
Or else but struggles to be more enslav'd?"

A little lower he speaks of Reason in the following Terms.

"Reason, the hoary Dotard, that to shun
The Rocks of Life, must ever miss the Port."

Nothing can be more strong and pathetic than the Exclamations made by the Emperor upon being informed

informed that *Irene*, whom he passionately loved, had been put to Death, particularly the following.

"Such Beauty, Sweetness, Worth were cheaply bought
With half the groveling Slaves that load the Earth."

Besides this Tragedy Mr. *Johnson* has wrote a Poem entitled *London*, which gave high Satisfaction to all Persons of Taste. About three Years ago he published *Rassilas, Prince of Abyssinia*, a Novel in the oriental Way, a Species of Writing, which is near of Kin to Poetry, and in which Mr. *Johnson* is allowed to surpass all *English* Authors. The *Life of Salvage*, wrote by him, is looked upon as a Master-piece of Biography, and shews that he is possessed of considerable Talents for writing History, tho' he has not thought proper to attach himself to that Branche of Literature. To conclude Mr. *Johnson's* Character as an Author, he is endowed with a Genius at once both penetrating and sublime: The Sagacity of his Criticisms sufficiently proves his Penetration; the noble Enthusiasm that runs through his allegorical and oriental Compositions equally demonstrates his Turn to the sublime. From these two Qualities united, we may reasonably expect that his Commentary upon *Shakespear* will do Justice to that great Author, who has hitherto suffered so much by Editors. With Regard to Mr. *Johnson's* private Character, he seems to be entirely of Mr. *Pope's* Opinion, that

"All Praise is foreign but of true Desert,
Plays round the Head, but comes not to the Heart."

Not

Not contented with surpassing other Men in Genius, he makes it his Study to surpass them in Virtue, and all that Humanity and that sincere Attachment to Religion, which shine thro' his Writings, are equally conspicuous in his Life. Though by no Means in Affluence, he is always ready to assist the indigent; and being of a truly philosophical Disposition, he is satisfied with a Competency, tho' by the Superiority of his Talents, he might have long since made a Fortune.

Mr. LOCKMAN.

THIS Gentleman, tho' he has confined himself chiefly to Translation and Compilation, may be justly considered as a more useful Writer than many who compose original Pieces. As he has resided several Years in *France*, he is as thoroughly acquainted with the Language as a Native, and must of Consequence be much more equal to the Task of translating, than most of those who undertake it. His *History of the Inquisition* is a Work equally useful and entertaining, as it is compiled from authentic Memoirs, and fully displays those Mysteries of Iniquity, which have rendered that bloody Tribunal odious to all whose Eyes are not darkened by the Mists of Bigotry. His *History of England, by Way of Question and Answer*, is a Work of the highest Utility, being the best calculated to introduce young Persons to the Knowledge of the History of their own Country, of any Thing of the Kind ever published. As Mr. Lockman is the Author of a considerable Number of Works of this Nature, it would be unnecessary to enumerate them all; I shall therefore conclude this Article with the
Mention

Mention of one which should not be passed over in Silence, as it contains a Treasure of curious and useful Knowledge, and is admirably calculated to give young Persons a just Idea of the Manners and Customs of different Nations, without which the Study of Geography is altogether dry and insipid. The Work I mean is the *Voyages of the Jesuits*, translated from *Les Lettres edifiantes & curieuses, ecrites des Missions etrangeres, par les Missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jesus*. This Work deserves the particular Attention of the Publick, because, as our Author justly observes in his Preface, no Men are better qualified to describe Nations and Countries than the Jesuits. Their Education, their extensive Learning, the Pains they take to acquire the Languages of the several Regions they visit; the Opportunity they have by their Skill in the Arts and Sciences, as well as by their insinuating Address, to glide into Courts, where Access is often denied to all but themselves. Their Familiarity with the Inhabitants; their mixing with, and often very long Abode among them; all these Particulars must necessarily give the Jesuits a much more perfect Insight into the Genius and Character of a Nation, than others who visit Coasts only, and that merely upon Account of Traffick, or from other lucrative Motives.

Dr. S M O L L E T.

Tobias Smollet, M. D. is a Native of Scotland.

He was a Sea Surgeon at the Time of the Expedition to *Carthagera*. It does not appear that he had ever much Practice as a Physician. The first Work by which he acquired Reputation in the Re-

public of Letters, was his Romance of *Roderick Random*, which must be acknowledged to be the best Work of the Kind in our Language, next to those of the late ingenious Mr. *Fielding*. He after this published the *Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, which, tho' it is wrote with some Spirit, has been justly censured, because it in the Incidents bears too strong a Resemblance to *Roderick Random*; as also, because the Account given in it of the Manners and Customs of the *French* in many Particulars deviates from the Truth. *Count Fathom*, another Romance of the Doctor's, seems to be superior to the foregoing. The *History of England*, which is his Master-piece, entitles him to a Place amongst Authors of the first Rank, as it is but doing Justice to say of it, that it is the best History of *England* that ever was wrote. It is a strong Proof of its Merit, that it has been translated into all the Languages of *Europe*. The Doctor, encouraged by his Success, continues to give a *Continuation* of it; but some have complained, that the *Continuation* falls short of the first Part. No Author has been concerned in a greater Variety of Publications than Dr. *Smollet*, as indeed no Author has a greater Variety of Talents. He is not, however, universal, having attempted dramatic Poetry, and failed in it. He wrote a Tragedy called the *Regicide*, which was never acted, and a Farce called the *Tars of Old England*, which was acted at *Drury-Lane* without Success.

Mr. H U M E.

IT must be acknowledged, for the Honour of *Scotland*, that it has in the present Age produced more Men eminent for having cultivated Literature with

with Success, than either *Great-Britain* or *Ireland*. *David Hume*, Esq. who reflects so high an Honour upon that Country of which he is a Native, was formerly Secretary to Lord *Albemarle*, when Ambassador at the Court of *France*. As an Author, he must be allowed to possess a considerable Share of Merit. His *Essays* are equally elegant and profound; but they have been greatly censured on Account of the Vein of Scepticism, which runs through them. Those, however, who consider them as Works of Genius, cannot deny them Praise, tho' they are certainly rather superficial in some Places. In History this Author comes the nearest to Dr. *Smollet*; in one Respect he even deserves to be preferred to him; his Observations are much more sagacious and profound; but his Manner is not equally picturesque, nor his Style equally pleasing.

Dr. GOLDSMITH.

THIS Gentleman was born in *Ireland*. He studied Physic at *Leyden*, and took the Degree of Doctor at *Edinburgh*. He has wrote many Treatises, which have met with universal Approbation. His *Essay on the present State of polite Learning in all Parts of Europe*, at once does Honour to his Taste and Genius. His miscellaneous Collection of Essays, published under the Title of the *Bee*, was greatly admired, both on Account of the Elegance of the Stile, in which it is wrote, and the Variety of entertaining Articles which it contains. But the *Chinese Letters*, first published in the *Ledger*, in Numbers, and since republished in Volumes, under the Title of the *Citizen of the World*, are, of all the Productions of this Author, those that do the highest

est Honour to his Genius, as they must be acknowledged by every Reader free from the Influence of Prepossession, to be but little inferior to the *Persian Letters* of the celebrated *Montesquieu*. To conclude *Dr. Goldsmith's* Character as an Author, it must be acknowledged, that whilst he is surpassed by few of his Contemporaries with Regard to the Matter which his Writings contain, he is superior to most of them in Style, having happily found out the Secret to unite Elevation with Ease, a Perfection in Language, which few Writers of our Nation have attained to, as most of those who aim at Sublimity swell their Expressions with Fustian and Bombast, whilst those who affect Ease, degenerate into Familiarity and Flatness.

*professus grandia turget,
Serpit bumi tutus nimium timidusque procella.*
HOR. de Arte poetica.

Dr. HAWKESWORTH.

THIS Author has a pretty taste for Poetry, as appears from his Songs and Oriental Tales; — pieces, which, tho' wrote in Prose, contain so much of the poetical Spirit, that no one but a Poet can succeed in composing them. His *History of Almorán and Hamet*, publish'd not long since, is not, however, equal to his Oriental Tales printed in the *Adventurer*, a periodical Paper of great Merit; tho' it may be justly reproached with one considerable Defect; the Author has so carefully copied the Style of Mr. *Johnson*, that the Imitation cannot but be obvious to every body. It is with Authors as with Players; those who too servilely copy the Manner

Manner of another, however excellent in itself, will never please: For as the Tone and Gestures of one Player may no more fit another than his Cloaths, so the stile of one Author, when assumed by another, must always have something constrain'd and unnatural. 'Tis remarkable that such Authors as have been most successful in copying the Stile of others, have seldom distinguish'd themselves by the Excellence of their own; and that such Players, as have the greatest Talent for Mimickry, have seldom been eminent for their Performance when they played in *propria personâ*: *Strader* is an Instance of the Truth of the first Part of this Observation; *Eastcourt* and Mr. *F——te* of the Truth of the second.

Mr. COLEMAN.

THIS Gentleman is Author of a Comedy called *The Jealous Wife*, by all Means the best that has appeared since the *Suspicious Husband*, to which it bears a strong Resemblance in the Language, Characters, and Incidents; and seems indeed to have been intended as a Counterpart to it. Mr. *Coleman* was moreover concerned in writing a periodical Paper called the *Connoisseur*, in Conjunction with Mr. *Thornton*.

Mr. BICKERSTAFF.

THIS Gentleman is the Author of *Thomas and Sally*, or, *The Sailor's Return*, the Opera of *Judith*, and some other Works of the same Kind; which please with the Assistance of Music, composed

composed by Dr. *Arne*, who is his chief Patron. Mr. *Blickstaff* is remarkable for writing Songs and Pieces of Humour, both in Verse and Prose. He has in particular an admirable Knack at imitating the Style and Manner of the celebrated *Swift*, the Glory and Boast of *Ireland*; in which Country this ingenious Gentleman was likewise born. From such Examples as these we may justly infer the Truth of that Observation of *Juvenal*;

*Summos posse viros, et magna exempla daturos,
Vervecum in patria crassoque sub aere Nati.*

Mr. CLELAND.

A Gentleman of no mean Abilities for Composition, whether in Verse or Prose. He is Author of the *Memoirs of a Coxcomb*—a Romance wrote with some Elegance; and of the *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*; which tho' justly censured by Men of rigid Morals, must be allowed to be the best executed and the most picturesque of any Work of the Kind, not excepting that of *Petronius*, and the celebrated Dialogues of *Meurfius*. Mr. *Cleland* has been not unjustly censured for the Affectation of his Style, in particular for adopting too many foreign Idioms. It may not be improper to inform the Reader that this Gentleman is the Son of Colonel *Cleland*, better known for his Intimacy with Mr. *Pope*, than for any Merit of his own.

THIS Gentleman is the Author of *Tom Jones*, the *History of the Sentimental Education*, the *History of the Sentimental Education*, and some other Works of the same kind, which place him in the Rank of the first Composers.

Mr. THORNTON.

THIS Gentleman, in Conjunction with Mr. Coleman, wrote a periodical Paper entitled the *Connoisseur*, which was well received by the Public, though it turns entirely upon trivial Subjects, treated in a trivial Manner, but with some Sprightliness of Wit.

Mr. FOOTE.

THIS Author is by no Means destitute of Humour or Talent for Comedy, as is evident from many Pieces which he has obliged the Public with. *The Man of Taste*, *The Author*, *The Knights*, and *The Minor*, are some of the most remarkable of these. It is with Pleasure I hear that he is now engaged in a Translation of the best comic Pieces of the *French*, a Work which would greatly contribute to improve our national Taste, and for which this Gentleman appears to be every Way qualified.

Mr. SHERIDAN.

THOMAS SHERIDAN, M. A. This Gentleman is a Native of *Ireland*, in which Kingdom he was greatly admired as a Player. Tho' the natural Weakness of his Powers might render his Execution defective, certain it is, that no Man better understands the Arts of speaking and acting than he. His Lectures may be of the highest Utility to those who are desirous of improving in Oratory.

ratory. He wrote long since a Farce entitled, *Captain O'Blunder*, taken in Part from the *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* of *Moliere*; it has never been acted in this Kingdom.

Mr. H A V A R D.

THIS Gentleman is a Native of Ireland, and a Player likewise. He wrote three Tragedies, viz. *Charles I. Scanderbeg*, and *Regulus*. None of these Pieces are now acted; the first was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain.

Mr. G A R R I C K.

THIS Gentleman, who must be allowed to be the best Actor that ever appeared upon any Stage, has given such Proofs of a Genius for Writing, that it seems probable he would have been ranked amongst first-rate Authors, had his Business afforded him sufficient Leisure to cultivate his Talents for Composition. His Prologues abound with Humour, and are wrote in a Style extremely sprightly and picturesque. His Farces are some of the best we have upon the Stage, and mostly written in the French Taste.

Mr. M U R P H Y.

ARTHUR MURPHY with some Difficulty obtained the Title of Esquire, being at first refused Admittance into the Inns of Court, on Account of his having appeared upon the Stage. Before

fore he commenced Actor, he wrote a periodical Paper, entitled, *The Grays-Inn Journal*. Just before he quitted the Stage, he wrote his Farce of the *Apprentice*; which was acted with some Applause. His next Attempt was a Farce called *The Upholsterer*; which, tho' better wrote than the former, had but indifferent success. His Tragedy of the *Orphan of China* has not been played above once since it's first Run. It is without Doubt greatly inferior to *Monsi de Voltaire's Orphelin de la Chine*. His *Desert Island*, tho' a pretty dramatic Poem, was but ill received by the Public. The Pieces by which he has acquired most Reputation, are *The Way to keep him*, *All in the Wrong*, and *The Old Maid*; all of which are in a great Measure taken from the *French*. Mr. Murphy was educated at the *Jesuits College* at *St. Omer's*. Before he dedicated himself to the Muses, he was Clerk to a Merchant at *Cork* in *Ireland*, (where he was born) and afterwards a Runner in *Coleman-street*. Not having any great Inclination to a mercantile Way of Life, he commenced Author and Actor. In the latter Capacity he was altogether unsuccessful; in the former he met with a Success at least equal to his Merit.

Mr. STERNE.

THE Rev. Lawrence Sterne, M. A. having for a long Time lived in Obscurity at *York*, of which City he was Prebendary, at length repair'd to this Metropolis; where he distinguish'd himself in the literary World, with an Eclat of which there have been but few Examples. His Success was owing to an Accident, by which some Authors would have been altogether discouraged.

He had offer'd to sell the Copy of *Tristram Shandy* to a Bookfeller at *York* for 50 *£*. the Bookfeller not being willing to give that Sum for it, he set out for *London*; where Mr. *Dedley* dealt with him for his Work; by which both he and the Author were considerable Gainers. The latter indeed made his Fortune by it, as it conciliated to him the Favour of all the Nobility and Gentry of the Kingdom. To the Success of this Performance he owed that Subscription for his Sermons published with the Title of the Sermons of *Yorick*; Which shews that Noblemen are not always remiss in rewarding Merit. It must be acknowledged that these Discourses are not inferior to any extant. With Regard to the Romance of *Tristram Shandy*, tho' it is the Opinion of many good Judges, that it had much greater Success than it deserves, it is by no means destitute of Humour. It is obvious that the Author proposed the extravagant Work of the famous *Rabelais* as his Model, as the Characters approach almost to Caricaturas, and the Drollery of the Style to Indecency. The four last Volumes are generally thought to fall short of the two first; and indeed it seems somewhat absurd to continue a Work of so ludicrous a Nature so long, even if the Author could constantly keep up to the Humour with which he set out at first; for as *Horace* justly observes,

Nec iussisse pudet, sed non incidere ludum.

"It is not amiss to deviate from Gravity, and
"to trifle sometimes; but it is wrong to do so al-
"ways."

Mr.

Mr. CHURCHILL.

THE Reverend Charles Churchill first discover'd his Talent for Poetry by writing the *Rosciad*, a severe Satire upon the Players. The Publication of this Poem having drawn upon him some severe Reflexions from the Critical Reviewers, he, in Revenge, published the *Apology*; wherein he has spar'd those Gentlemen as little as he before did the Players. His Poetry is animated, but in some Places incorrect.

Mr. LLOYD.

THIS Gentleman was formerly Usher to *Westminster School*. He has publish'd a *Miscellaneous Collection of Poems* by Subscription; of which we may properly say what *Martial* has said of his Epigrams, *Sunt quædam bona, sunt multa mediocritas, sunt plura mala*. The *Rosciad* having been father'd upon him, he declared himself, by Advertisement, not to be the Author of it, and upon that Occasion wrote an Epistle to Mr. Churchill.

Mr. DERRICK.

THIS Gentleman is a Native of *Dublin*. He has publish'd *A Collection of Poems*, and some other little Pieces. Altho' he is generally known by the Appellation of *Derrick the Poet*, it does not seem in the least probable that he is so called by Way of Eminence. He not long since published

an Edition of *Dryden's Works*, in four Volumes, Octavo. If he has any Chance for Immortality, he must owe it to his Name's being thus join'd to that of so great a Poet.

Pretty in Amber to observe the Forms
Of Hair, or Straws, or Grubs, or Dust, or Worms ;
The Things, we know, are neither rich or rare,
But wonder by what Magick they got there.

Mr. GLOVER.

THIS Gentleman is Author of an elegant Poem in blank Verse, entitled, *Leonidas*, and of the Tragedy of *Barbarossa* ; which was acted with some Success.

Dr. AKENSIDE.

AUTHOR of an admired Poem in blank Verse, entitled, *The Pleasures of Imagination*. This Subject has been much better treated in Prose by Mr. Addison in that excellent Work entitled *The Spectator*.

Dr. ARMSTRONG.

AUTHOR of a beautiful didactic Poem, entitled, *The Art of preserving Health*, and of *The Economy of Love*, a Poem which in many Places borders upon Indecency.

Mr.

MR. WHITEHEAD.

AS Mr. *Whitehead* is Poet Laureat, his Genius can hardly be called in Question; though we have had some Instances of Laureats who have been far from being the best Poets of their Age. Mr. *Whitehead* has wrote Satires with great Success: his Tragedies of *Crensa* and the *Roman Faiber* are wrote with some Spirit and Elegance; but it is obvious that the latter is a Translation from the *Horaces* of *Peter Corneille*. With Regard to the *Birthday Odes* composed by Mr. *Whitehead*, it seems probable that they will never reach Posterity. Our Monarchs must trust to History for Praise; for those whose Duty it is to sing their Praises in Verse, acquit themselves like *Chevilus*.

MR. FRANKLIN.

THE Rev. Mr. *Franklin* is Professor of *Greek* at the University of *Oxford*. His Translation of *Sophocles* is poetical, easy, and elegant, and extremely well calculated to inspire such as attach themselves to the Study of the Humanities with a Taste for the Beauties of the *Greek* tragic Poets; which are at present but little known. This Gentleman has undertaken to translate all the poetical Works of *Voltaire*; and it is evident from those Tragedies of that celebrated Author which he has already translated, that he is every Way qualified to do him Justice. Mr. *Franklin* having in some of his Writings spoken of Mr. *Murphy* in Terms which gave him Offence, the latter wrote a satirical Epistle to Mr. *Johnson*;

Johnson; in which he treats Mr. *Franklin* with great Severity. It is remarkable that in the Advertisement prefixed to this Poem, the Author compares himself to *Dryden*, and Mr. *Franklin* to Parson *Milburn*.

MR. MASON.

THIS Gentleman is likewise a Fellow of *Oxford*. He has wrote two dramatic Poems with Choruses, after the Manner of the Ancients, viz. *Elfrida* and *Caradriacus*. The former is a very beautiful Poem, and little inferior to the *Samson Agonistes* of *Milton*. Mr. *Mason* has an uncommon Talent for Imitation; as appears from several Passages in this Piece; in which he has admirably copied the Stile both of *Shakespeare* and *Milton*, and from his Monody on the Death of Mr. *Pope*; in which he has in a very masterly Manner copied the Stiles of *Chaucer*, *Spenser*, *Milton*, and Mr. *Pope* himself. It is a Loss to the Public that this Gentleman who seems to have great Talents for dramatic Poetry, has not thought proper to adapt his Pieces to the Stage; as, notwithstanding all he has said in Favour of the Chorus of Antiquity, it appears to be rather a Defect than a Perfection in the Drama, and could never take either in *France* or *England*, notwithstanding all the Attempts made to revive it.

DR. NEWTON.

IT is but doing Justice to Dr. *Newton* to say of him, that he is one of the greatest Divines now living. His Dissertations upon the Prophecies shew him

him to be possessed of profound Learning and uncommon Penetration, and must be acknowledged to be the best Book ever wrote upon this abstruse Subject, tho' it had before been treated by the renowned Sir *Isaac Newton*.

Dr. CHANDLER.

A Dissenting Minister of extensive Learning, who has acquired great Reputation by the many Treatises upon religious Subjects, which he has published. He is perfect Master of the *Hebrew*, together with the *Chaldee* and *Syriac* Dialects; a Knowledge which but few Divines can boast of being possessed of, altho' it is an essential Part of the Science of Theology. Dr. *Chandler* has lately published a Book, entitled, *An Answer to the History of the Man after God's own Heart*, which is universally allowed to have done the most Service to the Cause of Christianity of any Book that ever was wrote.

Mr. BARRON.

THE Rev. Mr. *Richard Barron* is a Dissenting Minister likewise. He was educated at the University of *Glasgow*, where he distinguished himself in an eminent Manner in all Sorts of Academic Exercises. Whether it was owing to the Envy which his superior Parts excited, or to his being naturally somewhat of a Humourist, he was during the first Year of his Residence at *Glasgow* looked upon as studious, and during the last looked on with all as mad; so that growing tired of the University,

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he left it, and soon distinguished himself by an uncommon Talent for Preaching. He is the Author of a Work, in three Volumes, 12mo, entitled, *A Cordial for low Spirits*; and of another, in 2 Volumes, 12mo, which was intended as a *Supplement* to the former, and is called the *Pillars of Priestcraft and Orthodoxy shaken*. A Vein of Humour runs through both these Works, in which the Author has at once levelled the Batteries of Argument and Sarcastism against Prelacy, which, he says, is a Hydra, that has proved a Pestilence to all Religion and Government. It is not my Province to determine whether the Principle he maintains is just or no; but certain it is, that he maintains it with great Spirit and Pleasantry.

Mr. B O U R K E.

THIS Gentleman is a Native of *Ireland*; he for some Time studied the Law, but he did not think proper to attach himself entirely to it. He acquired great Reputation by his *Vindication of Natural Society*, in which he copied the Style of the late Lord *Bolingbroke* with so much Exactness, that it was by many taken for a posthumous Work of that Nobleman. His *Essay upon the sublime and beautiful* is extremely ingenious; but the Maxims he lays down are not always exactly just. He has advanced, 'that whatever excites Terror in the Mind, is connected with an Idea of the sublime;' but he is herein evidently mistaken. A Gibbet is an Object that excites Terror in the Mind, but it is very far from being connected with an Idea of the sublime.

The

The E A R L of C O R K.

John Boyle, Earl of *Cork*, is one of the few Noblemen who look upon Literature as worthy of the Attention of the Great. His *Letters upon the Life and Death of the celebrated Dr. Swift* are wrote in a Stile equally easy and elegant, and contain curious Anecdotes of the Life of that Author, as well as just Criticisms upon his Works. His *Translation of Pliny's Epistles* is excellent, being entirely free from that Stiffness and Pedantry, which are the principal Defects of the Original. His *Commentary* abounds with Erudition and good Sense.

Lord L I T T L E T O N.

Lord Littleton has received from Nature a Talent both for Poetry and Prose. His Treatise upon the *Conversion of St. Paul* is equally remarkable for Strength of Argument, and Elegance of Stile. His Poems, most of which have been published in *Mr. Doddsley's Miscellaneous Collection*, discover a fine Taste, and a good Ear. His Masterpiece is a Collection of *Dialogues of the Dead*, published not long since. In this Work, tho' he does not equal *Lucian*, he is certainly greatly superior to *Monf. De Fontenelle*, or any of his Imitators.

Mr.

Mr. DODSLEY.

MR. Robert Dodsley, an eminent Bookseller, Mr. Pope perceiving him to be possessed of a Genius, took him under his Patronage. He has wrote some Farces, which discover a Vein of true Humour; the *Miller of Mansfield*; the *Toy-Shop*, &c. He has also wrote some very pretty Poems, and *Cleone*, a Tragedy, the Plan of which was suggested by Mr. Pope.

Mr. NEWBURY.

AN eminent Bookseller likewise. He is Author of *High Life below Stairs*, and *Polly Honeycomb*.

Mrs. ARABELLA LENOX.

THIS Lady wrote the *Female Quixote*, a Romance, which is full of Humour and entertaining Incidents, and, in the Opinion of the late ingenious Mr. Fielding, not much inferior to the *Don Quixote* of the celebrated Cervantes. She has also wrote *Sophia*, and other Novels, which are in great Esteem with the Admirers of Works of that Nature. Her *Shakespeare illustrated*, consists chiefly of Abstracts from the Books from which he has taken the Plots of his Plays. It, however, fails not of giving Satisfaction to those who are curious about every Thing which

which relates to that great Author. She likewise wrote the *Ladies Museum*, and translated the *Greek Theatre*.

Mr. PILKINGTON.

SON to the Rev. Mr. *Matthew Pilkington*, and the celebrated Mrs. *Letitia Pilkington*. As this Gentleman has published an Account of his own Life, under the Title of the *Memoirs of Jack Luckless*, we shall refer the Reader to it for Information, previously informing him, that the Author writes in a Style equally easy and elegant.

Mr. ROLT.

THIS Gentleman is Author of several Compilations, particularly of the *Lives of the Reformers*. He has also wrote some poetical Pieces.

Mr. RIDER.

THE Rev. Mr. *William Rider* is Assistant Master to St. *Paul's-School*. He wrote an *English Dictionary*, dedicated to Mr. *W. Pitt*, which would, doubtless, have been much better received by the Public, if the great Mr. *Johnson* had not been beforehand with him in that Task. His *History of England*.

England has been very well received by the Public, and is indeed wrote with great Accuracy and Erudition. Mr. *Rider*, as he understands the *Saxon*, *Teutonic*, *Welsh*, &c. has given in his History many Particulars which have escaped Authors unacquainted with those Languages.

MR. MILLAR.

THOUGH this Gentleman confines himself chiefly to translating, he sometimes assumes the Character of Author with Success. His Translation of the *Cours de belles Lettres* of the Abbot *Botteux* is equally elegant and just; nor are the Criticisms he has added, inferior to those of the original Author. His Translation of the Letters of the celebrated Marchioness *de Sevigni* is in a Stile as easy and familiar as that of the Original. This Gentleman is Son to that Mr. *Millar*, who wrote the *Humours of Oxford*, and some other Plays and Poems. He has travelled a good deal, having been a Sea Surgeon before he commenced Author.

MR. NUGENT.

MR. *Nugent* is said to have belonged to some religious Order in *France*. He has translated many Books from the *French*, among others, the *Spirit of Laws*, wrote by the celebrated M. *de Montesquieu*, to which he has by no Means done Justice.

Mr.

Mr. FLOYD.

THIS Gentleman has published many Compilations and Translations, which have been approved of by the Public, but he has wrote little or Nothing original.

Dr. HIFFERNAN.

Paul Hiffernan, M. D. is a Native of Ireland.

He studied Physic in *France*, where he resided for several Years. He commenced Author in *Dublin*, where that Business is less lucrative than any where else. When *Dr. Lucas* set up for Member of Parliament, he wrote a Paper against him, called the *Tickler*, which has been long since buried in Oblivion. Finding that he could not thrive as an Author in *Dublin*, he repaired to *London*, where he has found Means to procure a tolerable Subsistence by translating, compiling, and pamphleteering. He wrote a Farce called the *Cboicé*, which was acted at *Covent-Garden Theatre*, where it had but one Representation.

Dr. HILL.

Dr. Hill, equally well known in the medical and the literary World, is one of the most prolific Geniuses of the Age. He is Author of the *Inspector*, a periodical Paper, first printed in the *Daily Advertiser*; of the *Asser*, a critical Treatise upon the

Art of acting, taken in Part from the *French*; of a *History of Fossils*; and other Treatises upon *Natural History*; of the *Rout*, a *Farce*; of a Pamphlet upon the pernicious Consequences of taking *Snuff*; and many Books and Pamphlets too tedious to enumerate. This Gentleman had a Dispute with *Woodward* the Player, who took him off in the Character of the *Mock-doctor*. He has indeed been much pelted by contemporary Authors, particularly by Mr. *Smart*, who wrote a satirical Poem against him, called the *Hilliad*; upon which Mr. *Murphy* wrote a *Commentary*. He has likewise treated the Doctor with some Severity in his *Grays-Inn Journal*. But all this is no Proof that he wants Merit.

Mr. **G R E Y**.
THIS Gentleman is Author of the *Ode on a Country Church-yard*, and other Poems, which have been greatly admired.

Mr. **ARCHIBALD BOWER**.

THIS Gentleman is Author of the *Lives of the Popes*, and has been, if we may believe himself, Member of the Inquisition at *Ferme*, *Macerata* and *Rome*. It has, however, been asserted, that he herein only imposed upon the Public; and this has occasioned much Controversy, which I shall not attempt to decide.

Non nostrum est tantas componere lites.

Mr. *Bower* is a Native of *Scotland*.

Dr.

DR. WARBURTON.

THIS Author has by his Merit raised himself to the episcopal Dignity. His *Divine Legation of Moses* is a Work of much Learning, and has done great Service to the Cause of Christianity. The Dedication to the Free-Thinkers is a severe Satire upon the Inconsistencies of those who assume that Appellation. Dr. Warburton has, besides his Works of a more serious Kind, wrote *Commentaries upon the Writings of Shakespear and Mr. Pope*, an Occupation which may by some Persons of a severe Cast be thought derogatory to the Dignity of his Function.

Mr. H U R D.

AN excellent Critic, who has wrote a *Commentary upon Horace's Art of Poetry*, which abounds with shrewd Observations.

Mr. S P E N C E.

A Most judicious Critic. The *Polymetis*, and *Remarks upon Pope's Odyssey* are standing Monuments of Mr. Spence's Taste and Learning.

Mr. B A R R O W.

A Laborious and judicious Compiler. His Works are too voluminous to be here enumerated.

Dr. LARDNER.

DR. Lardner is a Dissenting Minister, whose Writings sufficiently prove that Learning is not confined to the Clergymen of the Church. His principal Work is upon the *Credibility of the Gospel History*, in 18 Volumes, 8vo. In this we meet with a compleat Body of Church History, in which all the knotty Points that occur are elucidated in the most satisfactory Manner; the Characters of the several Fathers of the Church are drawn with the utmost Impartiality; and there breathes a Spirit of Candour thro' the whole Performance, which cannot but recommend it greatly to the judicious. No Books are more proper to be perused by young Students in Divinity, as they will herein receive perfect Information concerning the Authors whose Writings they should chiefly study; nor can any be of higher Utility to such serious Christians as are desirous to enable themselves to give a Reason for the Hope that is in them.

Having thus concluded my Plan, I shall here take Leave of the Reader, desiring him to take Notice, that I have not placed the Authors according to their several Degrees of Merit, but just as their Names occurred accidentally to my Memory. I at the same Time assure the Public, that I have delivered my Sentiments with the utmost Impartiality, and that I had no interested View in speaking well of those I have praised, nor any Malice to those whom I have censured.

W. L. A.

F I N I S.